DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 179 118 HE 009 993

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TITLE Academic Professionalism: Do Men and Women Differ?
PUB DATE [78]
NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Rank (Professional): Changing Attitudes; *College Faculty; *Females; Feminism; Higher Education; *Males; *Professional Recognition; *Role Perception; Sex Differences; Sex Role; *Sex Stereotypes; Social Attitudes; Social Values; Women Professors

ABSTRACT

After defining professionalism and examining the researched disparities between men and women, the patriarchal model of professionalism is considered. The way that women have fared within the patriarchal model and four aspects of the model that would appear to benefit from feminization are discussed. The accepted sociological definition of professionalism encompasses three areas: competence, autonomy, and service. The field of literature and language is regarded as feminine, and the fields of history, philosophy, and the earth sciences are regarded as masculine. Competence includes long and thorough training, depth of knowledge, and the attitude of dedication to one's field. There are differences of opinion concerning men's and women's attitudes of dedication toward their profession and concerning competence measured by research. However, women and men are far more equal in these areas than in the rewards and status they receive as recognition for competence or in competence as judged by colleague interaction. The patriarchal model of professionalism assumes that stereotypes are real: that is, that women are warm, expressive, passive and subjective, whereas men manifest the competency cluster of characteristics and are independent, objective, competitive, logical, self-confident, and ambitious. It is concluded that if the patriarchal model could absorb feminization of its imbalance between career and private lives, its publishing mania, its cold and tough attitudes, and its self-seeking power motives, then both men and women could lead richer lives. (SW)

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Academic Professionalism: Do Men and Women Differ?

The subject of professionalism in relation to gender differences suggests three inter-related strands of approach. This paper will attempt first to define professionalism and also to examine the researched disparities between men and women. Second, it will consider the patriarchal model of professionalism and how women fare within it. Finally, it will point out four aspects of the patriarchal model which would appear to benefit from "feminization."

The accepted sociological definition of professionalism[1] encompasses three areas: competence, autonomy, and service. Competence includes long and thorough training, depth of knowledge, and the attitude of dedication to one's field. Autonomy implies the self-regulation of the profession: that is, its self-governing separation from the general public, which respects the knowledge and judgement within the field as greater than its own by virtue of the training and experience represented by the profession. The third component, service, connotes the altruism, or lack of self-interest, with which the professional renders his skills.

The field of literature and languages is regarded as "feminine," by contrast to the "masculine" fields of history, philosophy, and the earth sciences. In general, professional men and women within all fields are competent when one considers training and dedication. Men and women are not equal, however, when additional "competence" measurements such as productivity, rewards and status for recognized

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competence are concerned, nor where colleague interaction is taken as an index. Let us look at each of these factors separately. First, when attitudes of dedication are used as the measurement of competence, there is some evidence that women are more professional than are men. In 1963 John Colombotos did a study of 545 secondary school teachers in a midwestern suburban system. He found that among single people, women were more professional than men[3] and that "...among both single and married women teachers, it is the family oriented who are more professional than the work oriented."[4] He concluded that

> ...although the demands of the family role appear to conflict with professionalism, an orientation that values the family role as such, regardless of objective family status, appears to support a professional orientation towards teaching. This suggests that the orientation required of women in the teaching role may be an extension of the orientations required by their dominant roles as mothers and housewives, despite obvious conflicts between these roles in terms of time and energy.[5]

The next manifestation of competence is that of productivity, normally judged in terms of research and publication. In one of the more recent studies of productivity conducted on 186 women in 1970 at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), results indicated that not only did women equal men, but that "married women with or without children are no less productive than single ones."[6] However, it has been argued by Jessie Bernard in her book entitled Academic Women that women do publish less than men. She states, "Not ability but interest would seem to be involved, since the women who are in the 'masculine' writing areas are apparently as successful as men," and she adds that institutional level is more indicative of productivity than sex: "Women in universities, for example, are more productive than men in colleges."[7] Elizabeth

Janeway agrees that women publish less, but believes they do so because they "...habitually add the job of housekeeping to that of professor."[8] Cynthia Epstein ascribes the lower productivity rate of women to a lower visibility. For example, research from the more famous institutions, where women are less likely to be employed, is given greater notice. Furthermore, the work of women is less likely to be promoted by "...the activity of senior men in the field" or to be produced in collaboration with these more visible senior men.[9]

Despite these differences of opinion concerning attitudes of dedication towards one's profession, and competence measured by research, women and men are far more equal in these areas than in the rewards and status they receive as recognition for competence or in competence as judged by colleague interaction. As for the status of women as faculty members,

> ...women account for 31 percent of those receiving PhDs in the last five years, 33 percent of the faculty with full-time appointments but only 18 percent of full-time full professors and 8 percent of faculty teaching only graduate students in departments with PhD programs.[10]

Significantly, married women are given the least status or financial reward, whereas the marital and parental status of men"...may enter reward decisions as a possible indicator of perceived financial need."[11] It has already been noted that married women with or without children were found to be as productive as single women, although "married women experience greater difficulty in being taken seriously than do single women."[12] What seem to be operative here are some assumptions about female social position: first, that the family is <u>the</u> unit in the stratification system,

also that women derive their status from that of their husbands, and finally, that "Women determine their own social status only when they are not attached to a man."[13] In other words, only a single woman is judged and rewarded as an independent human being.

The fourth factor to be examined in the competence aspects of professionalism is that of colleague interaction, insofar as it recognizes and promotes competence. In this area the professionalism of women differs greatly from that of men. We will treat this disparity in terms of role, behavior proceeding from role, and effects.

The role expectation of women in this society embraces two basic concepts or images of women: the servant image, and the sex object image. Both of these images impose burdens and difficulties upon professional women that their male colleagues do not share, and both reinforce the notion that women are passive and dependant.[14] The servant image is founded upon the assumption that women are instinctively more nurturant than men, and that they enjoy being helpful because it is "natural" for them to be. Even a top professional woman can expect to "...encounter employers who expect her to fill in for an absent secretary, welcome new executives, or serve as a hostess at important business functions."[15] Furthermore, "Assuming that women are superior to men at fulfilling nurturant jobs, employers can feel justified in filling these occupational slots with women, and at the same time avoiding promoting women into positions of leadership."[16]

The sex object image of women is even more damaging to the colleague interaction between professional men and women. If a

woman is attractive, her ideas are often not taken seriously, and she is appreciated primarily for the status her ornamental value bestows upon the male group; whereas if she is plain, she is often pitied as a woman who pursued a career because she could not successfully pursue men.[17]

Due in part to these role images, the behavior of a professional woman among her colleagues differs from that of a man. She is expected to give men professional "stroking"--that is, encouragement, attention, and appreciation--which, though good for the man, often contributes to her own anxiety an loss of self-esteem because the stroking is not reciprocal.[18] Also she is expected to behave compassionately, to place her own professional needs for time and private study below those of her male colleagues. She is more often on call, and called upon, a situation which leads to the diffusion of her energy.[19] Most seriously, perhaps, the professional woman is frequently excluded by men from the important fiendship-plus-business alliances that meet at luncheon, coffee, or after committee work, to share information and to promote business advancement.[20] Unfortunately, this exclusion from privileged information groups sometimes takes place through the complicity of women themselves, who

> often not only exclude themselves, but favor exclusion of other women. They accept the image and definitions of this behavior as appropriate. The more informal the professional context, the more willing women seem to concede the 'rightness' of their exclusion.[21]

In addition, and equally unfortunately, many women do not respect the work of other professional women. This disrespect for one another "...confirms the fact that women view their differences

from men as deficiencies."[22] In other words, they secretly accept the inferior position conferred upon them by the patriarchal system.

The notable exception to these inequalities are the black women professionals whose work is taken more seriously because their mothers provided more active models, and whose community encouraged education on the basis not of gender identity but rather on the basis of brains.[24] The stereotype of the emotional feminine mind does not appear to be as easily imposed upon black women by their predominantly white male colleagues.[25]

The second aspect in the triad definition of professionalism is autonomy, or the self-regulation of the profession. This criteria for professionalism is perhaps the least viable, because it

> systematically ignores such facts as the failure of professions to monopolize their area of knowledge, the lack of homogeneity within professions, [and] the frequent failure of clients to accept professional judgement.[26]

In addition, the notion of autonomy has changed the concept of professionalism within the last two politically turbulent decades. This change involves the refusal on the part of the academic community to tolerate one of its members"...speaking out on issues in which he has no expertise,"[27] that is, on political issues. In his article "The Perils of Professionalism" in which he deals primarily with the field of political science, Alan Wolfe comments,

> one would hope they would see that all the recent talk of the importance of academic professionalism in many disciplines has grown, not out of the external relationships between the discipline and the society, but out of internal pressures for political conformity.[28]

The original notion of autonomy as a self-regulation of standards of excellence has changed equally for men as well as for "... women [who] are still fired or find their contracts are not renewed if they support their sisters' cause or 'political activism' too loudly."[29] Increasing pressure for political conformity can make the role of "professor" especially perilous to play. Consider the damage done to performance and society when any role changes from positive to negative, for the individual performing the role may become a puppet or robot, one who pantomimes "...only a bundle of prescribed gestures with nothing inside to tie them together; and too many of these robots a changing society cannot afford, for they do not adapt to change."[30] The empty performance is a far cry from the conviction manifested by the great teachers who

> ..are enthralled by their subjects...vitally interested in ideas, people to whom ideas are important...people who 'profess,' debate, argue, stand for something, live their subject.[31]

Professionalism as teaching, or as the service part of the triad, would seem, on the basis of past research, to differentiate between men and women. Jessie Bernard in 1963 postulated the distinction between the man of knowledge and the woman teacher. The former is singleminded in his devotion to his career, is aggressive, innovative, and controversial. The latter is nurturant, encouraging in the classroom, a tool for the conveying of established

knowledge, and apt to be teaching core courses because the material is non-controversial.[32] That observation was made twelve years ago, and I do not believe that present trends in 1975 will support its implications. Indeed, I would postulate that the best teachers of both sexes are androgynous in their outlook, "...feminine in [their] affective responses...and masculine in [their] intellectual grasp of the world."[33] The introduction of the androgynous model brings me to the next approach to professionalism that I would like to treat briefly: that is, the patriarchal model and its assumptions about women.

The patriarchal model of professionalism assumes that stereotypes are real: that is, that women are warm, expressive, passive and subjective, whereas men manifest the "competency cluster" of characteristics and are "...independent, objective, ...competitive, l gical...self-confident...ambitious."[34] As Florence Howe has pointed out, "..sexual stereotypes are not to be identified with sexual or innate differences, for we know nothing about these matters."[35] She also noted that the patriarchal system believes in the stereotypes as givens and has even established them "...as desired norms."[36] What does this mean to the woman in the professions? First, this sexist ideology assumes that the "natural" woman will not <u>be</u> in the professions at all, because the "natural" woman really wants to stay at home.[37] The natural woman is of course the stereotypical woman. Moreover,

> This denial of women working for their own objectives leads to the common belief that the working wife or mother <u>has</u> to work, a phrase which implies that the woman would <u>really</u> rather not work...[38]

If a woman is assumed not to want to work, she is assumed to be deficient in the dedication and commitment of the true professional. As a corollary to the exclusion of women from the patriarchal definition of professionalism, those women who do enter the professions are frequently considered un-feminine or overly aggressive.[39] Women, because of the rigid stereotyping under which they suffer when warmth and expression are made mutually exclusive from the competency characteristics, are, one would suspect, reflecting attitudes common not to the professional but to the paraprofessional. In other words, what separates the paraprofessionals from the professionals also separates the stereotypical woman from the stereotypical man:

> Professionals see themselves as liberal and humanistic. They are bureaucratic and technological in practice...The paraprofessional by contrast sees himself as warm, empathetic, and understanding, at least partly because of the nature of his life experiences. [40]

Critics of the patriarchal model have stated that it does not tolerate warmth and expressiveness;[41] and that the academic system values a tough, cold approach, especially on the graduate level: "There is not only an absence of a nurturing aspect in the format of great graduate universities, but a positive rejection of such an attitude."[42]

Those of us who rebel against the sexist ideology have asked ourselves, what kind of women might not want to be servants or sex objects while simultaneously fulfilling professional roles? It is not puritanism on our parts, or a refusal to help others, so much as the fact that these subsidiary roles are demanded of us too

often, that we are not given the courtesy of choice in these matters. This observation suggests a criticism of the male or patriarchal model of professionalism. Even a brief criticism, such as the one which follows, should keep two questions in mind. First, what would we keep as well as reject from the patriarchal model? Second, what would we add, or even substitute, in our theoretical "feminization" of patriarchal professionalism? Both questions assume that there are some aspects of stereotypical feminine and masculine qualities that are worth preserving, but that these qualities may prove damaging to individuals if society insists that they be preserved separately by gender.

Clearly worth preserving in the patriarchal model of professionalism are the long and careful training periods, the standards of excellence, and the concept of altruistic service. On the other hand, the lack of balance between career and family lives, characteristic of a male professional who spends all of his time and involvement in his work, would seem to need correcting. As Philip Slater asked, if the profession usurps one's humanity, is it worth the price?

> When a man asks a woman if she wants a career...He is saying, are you willing to suppress half of your being as I am, neglect your family as I do, exploit personal relationships as I do, renounce all personality as I do?...a 'career' thus defined, is indeed undesirable...it seems like a pernicious activity for any human being to engage in, and should be eschewed by both men and women. [44]

Interestingly, the "domestication tolerance" (or willingness to place self second) found to characterize married women professionals[45]

would seem to mitigate for the woman the unbalanced, career-crazed attitude of the male that Slater describes. It is the ability to weigh values and decide upon priorities that, according to Elizabeth Janeway, defines the multiplex structure of a woman's role today.[46] The fact that a woman "...needs to be aware of what is going on in the personal relationships around her and... to grasp intuitively the emotional background of any situation,"[47] may well increase her successful performance in the teacher's role. This balance might advantageously be absorbed by the patriarchal model.

The publishing mania fostered by the patriarchal system is a corrollary to the lack of balance between career and personal life. There is of course a close relationship between effective teaching and innovative research. But research notwithstanding, publication for its own sake, in great quantity and of dubious worth or significance, is a well recognized flaw in the system. It has been said that the mania to publish, perhaps without regard for the value of the research, can indicate compulsive neurosis in a personality.[48] Florence Howe observed that enforced publishing at a high rate can ruin good teaching.[49] When and if the academic institutions begin competing for students to swell their flagging undergraduate enrollments, these students are likely to choose an institution for the quality of its teaching even more than the quantity of its publications.

The third questionable element in the patriarchal model of professionalism is the coldness or tough objectivity of the system.

Several of our colleagues in literature and languages have made assertions in this context. Joyce Carol Oates maintains that an instructor can make the material "come alive" by a less disguised personal response.[50] Allen Brick laments the schism between mind and emotions wrought by the social stereotypes of male-female, mind-emotion[51] and he believes that it is essential for a man to effect a connection between his consciousness and his feelings.[52] Furthermore, in a test of 1000 students and 119 faculty at the UC Davis campus in 1971, it was demonstrated that both students and faculty believed that warmer teaching is better teaching, since their concept of the effective professor included the traits of dynamism, enthusiasm, and enjoyment.[53] It is true that at times a professor's frightening, cold demeanor can camoflage a lack of course content or preparation. Equally extreme is the too personal, autobiographical style that substitutes anecdotes for concepts and facts. Yet in my experience it has been the professional women who have had a greater humility, and consequently a greater freedom and range of humor. They dare to take themselves less seriously than do men. For that matter, high seriousness, as a self-perspective, is absurd. It leads to a pompousness as intolerable to others as it is falsely distorted with relation to the whole.

Finally, the patriarchal model can be criticized for the self-seeking power motive that conflicts with the ideal of altruistic professional service. Authoritative power, or the enforceable right to command others, is probably less desired in academia than influence, or "the ability to manipulate the social situation of

others or their perception of it."[54] It was Jung who noted that the experiences of loving and of power over another are mutually exclusive.[55] It is no wonder then, and indeed it has been well documented, that elite male power groups omit the socially conditioned warm, expressive women. Lionel Tiger cites male bonding groups as the function and cause of aggression,[56] and while he does not take his observation to its conclusion, Martha Mednick does:

> If this 'male' problem is innate to being male, a reduction of the males in power relative to females would diminish a major cause of social violence. If, on the other hand, this male defect of aggressiveness, bravado, machismo, or dominance is the result of sex-role specialization--which it probably is--then it would be cured by the elimination of sex-typed socialization. 57

The power motive is so well conditioned that men in teaching do not respond similarly to male and female department heads. This is either because the male perceives his female boss as powerless in the chain of influence ascending above to her male boss, or possibly because he sees her as lacking in promotability.[58] In any case, the female chairperson has to work harder to generate morale among her male subordinates than would a male.

What can we conclude from all of this? For one thing, if the patriarchal model could absorb feminization of its imbalance between career and private lives, its publishing mania, its cold and tough attitudes, and its self-seeking power motives, then all of us, both men and women, could lead richer lives. For another thing, it would be safe to say of the professional men and women in the future, "Do they differ? The good ones don't." And that would be so much easier.

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